(b) if so, whether various workers' unions have submitted memoranda to Government for fulfilling their demands; and

(c) if so, the details of the demands and the steps being taken by Government for fulfilling the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (c) National Projects Construction Corporation Limited (NPCC) is a sick Public Sector Undertaking under the administrative control of the Ministry of Water Resources. The company is unable to discharge its liability on its own. it mainly depends upon the assistance provided by the Government. With the help of assistance provided by the Government, the outstanding bills of salaries/wages of employees of NPCC Ltd. have been cleared upto May, 2002. Some worker's unions have submitted from time to time their memoranda of demands regarding wage revision and outstanding dues of salaries/wages etc. The financial constraints faced by NPCC Limited could not permit them to implement the wage revision/to clear outstanding dues. As the Hon'ble Labour Court, Nagpur has restrained the management of NPCC Ltd. from holding negotiations with the representatives of the All India NPCC Employees Federation who enjoys maximum membership amongest workmen of NPCC Ltd., the demands of workmen could not be addressed. During the financial year 2003-2004, Ministry of Water Resources has already released a sum of Rs. 8.50 crore till date to NPCC Limited to meet the outstanding dues.

Objections raised by Ministry of Environment and Forests

277. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the decision of Government to link the rivers of India and develop inter-basin transfers of water is being reviewed in view of some serious difficulties likely to be faced and reservation expressed by many State Governments, NGOs and others;

(b) whether it is also a fact that even the Ministry of Environment and Forests has recently expressed serious concerns by giving a long list of 23 objections to the proposal;

(c) the details of the views expressed by various State Governments, the concerned Ministries at the Centre and others; and

(d) the present status of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) Various basin States have expressed divergent views about the water balance studies and feasibility reports prepared by National Water Development Agency (NWDA). With a view to bringing about a consensus among the States and provide guidance on norms of appraisal of individual projects and modalities for project funding etc. the Central Government has set up a Task Force on interlinking of rivers.

(b) Ministry of Environment & Forests has listed out some environmental concerns which need to be taken into consideration in the project formulation exercise.

(c) The major apprehensions are as follows:

(i) Submergence of cultivable and forest land and displacement of people due to construction of storage reservoirs.

(ii) States have apprehensions about the availability of surplus water worked out by NWDA.

(iii) Apprehensive about reliability of long distance transfers.

(iv) States feel that proposed water transfer in proposals of interlinking of rivers may disturb the existing tribunal awards.

(v) Power requirement for lifting of water may not be available.

(vi) Environment concerns relate to submergence of forests and cultivated areas, rehabilitation & resettlement, siltation, bio-diversity loss etc.

(d) NWDA has taken up preparation of feasibility reports of 30 identified link projects under Peninsular and Himalayan components of National Perspective Plan, Feasibility reports in respect of 8 links has already been completed.